

# Tennessee Reading First Intervention Guide

*By*

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# Preface

It is not often that a pearl of great price is provided directly to those who can most take advantage of its value and use it with great impact to enhance the lives of many. That, in a way, is what you have been provided with the *Tennessee Reading First Intervention Guide*. Jim Herman and his colleagues with the Tennessee Intervention Group have written this booklet as a means for a major step toward their goal of making the state of Tennessee number one in literacy success in the United States. The essence of this booklet is that for true success to occur all students must be provided with the situated instruction needed to meet their needs as literacy learners. For many students, interventions designed to enhance their progress in reading are a necessity.

As you read the suggestions and guidelines in this booklet, consider the many ways you might construct even more effective intervention practices for struggling readers. Discuss with your fellow teachers and educational leaders how you might work cooperatively to implement interventions and how you might share case studies to assist each other in even more effective practices. Identify the ways in which your classroom, school, and district are making effective strides towards improving outcomes for struggling readers and ways changes are required. Select several of these ideas for change and accept them as your charge. Work closely with your colleagues so that Tennessee educators might contribute to fulfilling Jim Herman's dream of a state where all students are capable readers who enjoy reading.

—Sharon Vaughn, H.E. Hartfelder/Southland Corp Regents  
Professor of Human Development, University of Texas.



SECTION 1

# Intervention in Reading First Schools

*The purpose of this publication is to ensure alignment of reading instruction and intervention with State Board of Education policy and State education standards.*

The *Tennessee Reading First Intervention* Guide provides guidance on procedures for establishing a three-tier structure for reading instruction and intervention. The purpose of this publication is to ensure alignment of reading instruction and intervention with State Board of Education policy and State education standards.

Reading First schools in Tennessee use a system of reading intervention that is based on the Three-Tier Reading Model. A key support for the Three-Tier Reading Model is the school Literacy Team.

## Literacy Team

The Literacy Team is composed of educators that include, but are not limited to, the principal, Literacy Leader, Title I teacher, reading specialists, representatives from all grade levels, English Language Learners (ELL) and special education. The team implements, oversees and monitors the school’s reading program/curricula. It provides data-based organizational direction for literacy instruction and decision-making.



The team holds monthly meetings following an agenda that addresses ways to support the teaching and learning of reading. It is the responsibility of team members to disseminate the information to those they represent. Results of the meetings may also be topics for faculty meetings and professional development. Literacy Team meetings are documented with agendas, minutes, next steps, and timelines.

The Literacy Team has advisory and decision-making responsibilities that address the needs of the school, teachers, and students in planning, assessment, instruction, and professional development.

In addition, the Literacy Team analyzes school-wide assessment data to determine school trends and

grade level needs. The data is used to formulate long-term and intermediate goals and objectives.

Additionally, the Literacy Team leads the entire staff in the development of the Reading First Benchmarking document, setting goals and strategies with indicators to identify full implementation. Goals should be prioritized by the Literacy Team and communicated to all staff members. Periodic review and revisions are made to assure high quality teaching and learning.

The Literacy Team meets to review progress monitoring results and benchmark data. The team also determines intervention plans for students not achieving benchmark. Team members analyze the effectiveness of the intervention and suggest adjustments in instruction based on the data. The Literacy Team communicates high expectations to all teachers and students. The team also determines who will be a part of data assessment meetings to make decisions about individual student goals and objectives.

A further responsibility of the Literacy Team is to analyze needs of the school and its staff to determine an effective professional development plan. The team submits recommendations to members of the Reading First Cadre, a group of skilled university faculty and other reading experts. The cadre assists the literacy team in determining the focus of the five days of school-embedded professional development and aids in creating the 90-hour professional development plan required of all Reading First schools.

**Checklist for Literacy Team**

- ☐ Select Literacy Team members at the beginning of the school year
- ☐ Conduct monthly meetings to determine areas of need and report to faculty
- ☐ Create school-wide benchmarking goals
- ☐ Analyze the effectiveness of intervention and make adjustments
- ☐ Submit recommendations to the Cadre for the five days of school-embedded professional development
- ☐ Create the 90-hour Professional Development Plan
- ☐ Determine the focus of the five days of school-embedded professional development

SECTION 2

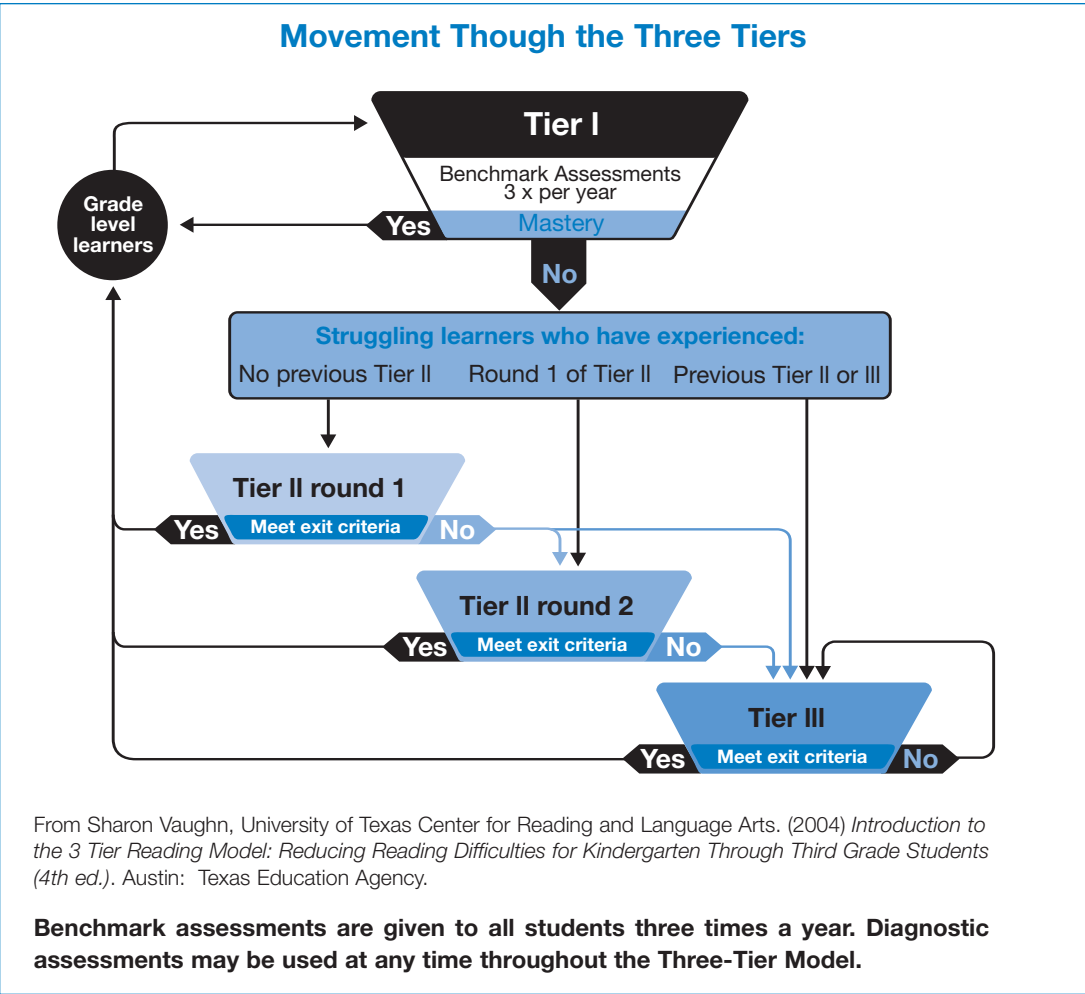
# The Three-Tier Model

*The Three-Tier Model is a prevention model that aids in the identification of at-risk and struggling readers and provides support throughout the early years of schooling.*

The Three-Tier Reading Model is designed to meet the reading needs of all students in the classroom. The Three-Tier Model is a prevention model that aids in the identification of at-risk and struggling readers and provides support throughout the early years of schooling. This framework aids in delivering assessment-driven, differentiated reading instruction for all students. It focuses on reading instruction that uses scientific research-based core, supplemental, and intervention reading programs/curricula.

## Using the Three-Tier Model

The following information provides a description of the Three-Tier Model in Tennessee Reading First schools.



## Tier I

Tier I consists of an uninterrupted, 90-minute minimum, scientifically-based, core reading program/curricula for all K-3 students. A comprehensive core program/curricula is the “base” reading program/curricula designed to provide instruction in the five components of reading (as appropriate) for all students and is aligned with state reading standards. In general, the core program should enable the vast majority of students to attain grade-level or above reading goals. **The classroom teacher delivers the core program/curricula in a direct, explicit and systematic manner adhering to the fidelity of the program/curricula.** Core classroom teachers provide ample practice opportunities for students to respond and demonstrate what they are learning. Students are also given immediate feedback during initial instruction and practice. An effective Tier I program includes whole group and small group instruction, literacy centers, and collaborative learning (peer tutoring, partner reading, choral reading, reader’s theater, etc.) focusing on the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Tier I includes Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) benchmark assessments for all students three times a year—fall (two weeks after school begins), winter and spring. DIBELS data drives the placement of students within this model. A literacy observation tool should be used to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core program/curricula and to ensure differentiated instruction is used to meet students needs.

## Tier II

Tier II intervention addresses the needs of students who are not progressing adequately in the core reading program. DIBELS benchmark assessments identify students who exhibit low early literacy skills and are at-risk for reading difficulty. Specialized, scientifically research-based reading (SBRR) program/curricula emphasizing the five essential components (as appropriate) are utilized when working with students in homogenous small-group instruction for a minimum of thirty minutes per day, in addition to the minimum of 90 minutes of core reading instruction. Frequent (every two weeks) DIBELS progress monitoring on targeted skill(s) to ensure adequate progress and learning is **vital**.

*Tier II intervention addresses the needs of students who are not progressing adequately in the core reading program.*

Individual schools must designate an appropriate setting for Tier II intervention. Typically, Tier II intervention does not take place in the 90-minute reading block. It may occur in the classroom or in an intervention setting. The Tier II interventionist may be the classroom teacher, a specialized reading teacher or an external interven-

*Tier II intervention should begin as soon as possible, no later than the third or fourth week of school.*

tionist specifically trained for the intervention. The external interventionist may be a trained and monitored paraprofessional or volunteer. Good interventionists redirect off-task behavior, provide students with caring and positive feedback, and effectively communicate expectations by providing clear and explicit goals for activities. Additionally, interventionists should consistently follow lesson plans and select practice items that meet lesson objectives. **The interventionist delivers the selected intervention program/curriculum in a direct, explicit and systematic manner adhering to the fidelity of the program.** DIBELS benchmark assessment should be completed within one to two weeks after the start of school. Tier II intervention should begin as soon as possible, no later than the third or fourth week of school.

One round of Tier II instruction occurs five days a week for ten to twelve weeks, covering most of the semester. **A professional, data-driven decision must be made about the student's instructional needs after the first round of intervention is complete.** The options to consider are:

- exiting Tier II if student is able to meet the benchmarks after a complete round of intervention;
- continuing with a second round of Tier II intervention;
- returning to Tier II if later assessment indicates the need;
- entering Tier III intensive interventions; or
- receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention in summer school.

The Literacy Team forms, with faculty input, an instructional plan based on these options. It is critical that a student not exceed twenty weeks of Tier II intervention without careful assessment of the student's needs through one-on-one diagnostic testing.



Tier II intervention is provided daily (five days a week) through a minimum of thirty minutes of intensive, focused instruction on critical early reading skills. This additional instruction should NOT be done during the 90-minute reading block, as the aim is to support, rather than replace, core reading instruction. Scheduling issues must be resolved on an individual school basis. Interventionists must develop daily lesson plans and keep accurate records of student activity with progress monitoring.

Tier II groups are organized according to the skills targeted for each student based on DIBELS data. Flexible, small group instruction increases the level of student engagement by providing students with ample opportunities to respond. Grouping students based on their skill deficits allows the interventionist to match the instruction to individual needs. Student groups must be flexible as instructional priorities may change based on DIBELS progress monitoring. Groups should not exceed three to five members.

The purpose of Tier II intervention is to provide additional attention, focus, and support. Tier II intervention must be systematic and explicit (instruction with modeling, multiple examples, and feedback to individual students) as well as aligned with state standards. Coordinating instruction for the intervention in the core program ensures that students have additional opportunities embedded throughout the school day to practice targeted skills.

*If a student exits Tier II intervention during benchmark assessment, progress monitoring continues until the next benchmark assessment.*

**Tier II Checklist**

- ☐ Select research-based intervention program(s)/curriculum
- ☐ Train and supervise interventionists
- ☐ Identify students who have not met benchmarks
- ☐ Identify specific skill areas needing additional instruction for each student
- ☐ Use flexible, homogeneous grouping
- ☐ Select components of the intervention curriculum that focus instruction on targeted skill areas
- ☐ Monitor progress every two-weeks with DIBELS and observations
- ☐ Use progress-monitoring information to adjust instruction, or exit students when appropriate
- ☐ Include a record of the intervention and progress-monitoring data in students' files

**Tier III**

Tier III intervention is generally for students who have attended two rounds of Tier II instruction and have not made adequate progress. Professional judgment and assessment measures are used to decide if students should be moved into Tier III after only one round of Tier II instruction. Also, students who have exited Tier III may re-enter Tier III as needed. The Literacy Team assists in making these decisions.

*Tier III intervention is generally for students who have attended two rounds of Tier II instruction and have not made adequate progress.*



*Tier III instruction should be systematic and explicit, providing multiple examples and feedback that are individualized for each student.*

Tier III groups are organized based on DIBELS data and according to the skills students have not mastered. Grouping in this manner allows interventionists to match instruction to the students’ needs. Group sizes in this tier should not exceed three members for maximum benefits.

Tier III intervention contains carefully designed and implemented SBRR instruction and materials emphasizing the five essential components of reading. Tier III instruction should be systematic and explicit, providing multiple examples and feedback that are individualized for each student. Interventionists must develop daily lesson plans, and keep accurate records of student activity. **The interventionist delivers the selected intervention program in a direct, explicit and systematic manner adhering to the fidelity of the program/curriculum.**

Students who are eligible for Tier III have not been able to reach benchmarks in Tier II; therefore, the interventionist in Tier III must make additional adaptations and adjustments to instruction. Instruction can be intensified by extending the following: (1) the range of examples—modeling or explaining; (2) the task difficulty—break the task into smaller parts; (3) the task length— extend the length, student provides more responses; (4) the group size—reduce the size of the group; and/or (5) the type of response—move away from yes or no answers.



Other modifications include providing a minimum of sixty minutes of additional intervention time daily, determining whether a behavioral program is needed, adjusting the instruction, and/or changing the person providing the instruction.

**Vital Tier III Strategies**

- Repeating opportunities for practice and review
- Offering additional opportunities for correction and feedback
- Increasing time on reading instruction and practice
- Providing repetition, practice and review
- Making learning visible
- Scaffolding by using, then fading, prompts and cues

Students exit Tier III when they have reached the DIBELS benchmark or are identified as strategic.

Students who marginally reach benchmark at mid-year may need additional support and continued progress monitoring on a monthly basis. If an exited student fails to reach benchmark, he or she may re-enter Tier II or Tier III and exit as needed.

The Three-Tier Model works in conjunction with special education. **Tier III may include both special education and general education students.** All students, including special education students, are placed in the model according to individual data. Each school or district must decide the relationship between the Three-Tier Reading Model, special education and Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI). Historically, the discrepancy model has been used for placement into special education and also aligns with the Three-Tier Model.

**Tier III Checklist**

- ☐ Select research-based, intensive intervention programs/curricula
- ☐ Train and supervise interventionists
- ☐ Designate the intervention location
- ☐ Use DIBELS benchmark assessment to identify students not making progress in Tier II
- ☐ Identify specific skill areas needing intensive intervention for each student
- ☐ Arrange student grouping according to skill deficits
- ☐ Customize instruction based on targeted skill areas
- ☐ Monitor progress every week to two weeks with DIBELS progress monitoring
- ☐ Use progress monitoring information to adjust instruction or exit when appropriate
- ☐ Include a record of the intensive intervention and progress monitoring data in the students' files



SECTION 3

# Assessment

*Monitoring or assessment of students should be frequent and timely, and should also measure a small number of specific skills.*

Assessment is the driving force behind instruction and student learning. When professionals analyze each child’s performance and make appropriate decisions, pedagogy is transformed into a true data-driven process. The following section discusses the importance of assessment in the Three-Tier Reading Model and explains how Tennessee Reading First schools use these tools to get results.

## DIBELS

DIBELS is used to assess all students three times per year. This screening provides the data for determining student placement and/or movement within the Three-Tier Model. After each benchmark assessment, the Literacy Leader meets with the Literacy Team to determine flexible groups in Tier I and, if needed, Tiers II and III. A schedule is devised in this meeting and student groups are assigned to the person who will provide intervention.

## Progress Monitoring

Monitoring or assessment of students should be frequent and timely, and should also measure a small number of specific skills.



Tennessee Reading First schools progress monitor at least every two weeks for students who are identified as strategic and intensive based on the DIBELS assessment. Results from progress monitoring help teachers and interventionists determine the success of the current tier placement and allow instructional adjustments. For students not progressing, increases in the frequency and intensity of intervention must be addressed to ensure success. These changes may include smaller grouping size, intensity of instruction, and weekly progress monitoring. Students who are successful in intervention should remain in the same placement until the next progress monitoring occurs. The use of progress monitoring combined with timely intervention should result in fewer students with reading difficulties and ultimately reduce the number of students referred for special education services.

**If a student exits Tier II intervention during benchmark assessment, progress monitoring continues until the next benchmark assessment.**

## Student Placement

Students exiting Tiers II or III by reaching benchmark should be monitored monthly to ensure that they have retained adequate grade level skills. These students must continue to receive progress monitoring.

It is important to place students into tiered groups, especially Tier III, according to needed skills identified through assessment. This allows the teacher/interventionist to be explicit and deliver the appropriate program/curriculum effectively.

Flexible grouping and whole group instruction require adaptation of instruction and materials. The use of flexible grouping allows a student to be a part of one group during a phonics lesson and a part of another for fluency practice. Seating students in clusters of desks and delivering instruction to the whole class does NOT constitute flexible grouping.

## Benchmark Assessment Team

The Benchmark Assessment Team is responsible for benchmarking all students three times per year. The Benchmark Assessment Team may include administrative staff, Literacy Leaders, Title I teacher, reading specialists, school psychologists, school counselors, curriculum specialists, librarians, non-classroom teachers and trained paraprofessionals.

Classroom teachers should not administer benchmark assessments; however, it is appropriate for teachers to progress monitor their own students. The Benchmark Assessment Team must work closely with the Literacy Leader in organizing, planning and administering the DIBELS benchmark assessments. The Literacy Leader meets with the Literacy Team to plan data assessment meetings for all grade levels after each of the three benchmarks.

*Classroom teachers should not administer benchmark assessments; however, it is appropriate for teachers to progress monitor their own students.*

## Using Assessment Results in the Three-Tier Model

- **TIER I:** All students participate in Tier I instruction and are grouped based on the results of DIBELS and TCAP tests (if available for that grade level). DIBELS and TCAP data allow the classroom teacher to plan for differentiated instruction from one benchmark measure to the next. Teachers will use assessment results to drive various instructional strategies for whole and small groups. Classroom teachers must make informed instructional decisions based on assessment. **Tier I is the first line of defense when discussing intervention.**
  
- **TIER II:** Students who are “strategic” and “intensive” on the **entry DIBELS assessment** and within a mid- to low-level range on TCAP, if available, must be placed in Tier II. These students (all strategic and intensive) must be placed into groups and receive an additional 30-45 minutes of reading instruction outside of the 90-minute block using a research-based intervention program. Adjustments should be made after teachers review students’ progress monitoring reports.
  
- **TIER III:** After one or two rounds of Tier II (50-100 sessions), students identified as “intensive” on DIBELS and fall within a low- to non-proficient range on TCAP or other SBRR diagnostic data must be placed in Tier III. This tier must be conducted outside the 90-minute block in a pull out method. These 60 to 75 minutes of daily intervention provide a double dose of intensive, systematic, and explicit instruction using research based materials. Adjustments can be made after review of progress monitoring reports. Appropriate diagnostic assessments should be administered by the Literacy Leader or teacher if progress monitoring reports continue to be inconsistent or flat-lined. It may be appropriate to share these results with special education personnel.

**The Literacy Leader establishes the intervention schedule for Tiers II and III.**

Teachers may need to refer students to the Literacy Leader for diagnostic screening if other concerns arise within the tiers. All students, including ELL and identified special education students whose IEP allows it, are assessed using the same procedures and placed appropriately in the Three-Tier Model.

The analysis of reading assessment instruments helps schools to:

- 1. identify the reading components measured by each instrument,
- 2. determine the most appropriate use of each assessment, and
- 3. select reading assessment instruments that will best match student needs.

**Assessment Checklist**

- ☐ Set assessment schedule (3 benchmarks) and screen all students
- ☐ Plan a meeting with each grade level to review assessment data
- ☐ Gather class assessment data
- ☐ Identify and place students who are grade level or benchmark learners, students who are strategic (have difficulty with some reading concepts or skills), and students who are intensive (have extreme reading difficulties)
- ☐ Group students for instruction and intervention
- ☐ Identify SBRR materials for intervention
- ☐ Assign and schedule students for appropriate intervention activities
- ☐ Monitor students' progress
- ☐ Make adjustments based on progress monitoring
- ☐ Consult Benchmark Assessment Team as needed

SECTION 4

# Selecting an Intervention Program

All intervention programs utilized in Reading First schools must be based on scientifically based reading research.

Intervention programs are used for students who are not meeting benchmark goals during the core instruction. All intervention programs/curricula utilized in Reading First schools must be based on scientifically based reading research. The National Reading Panel has identified the five essential components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency). It is imperative that intervention programs/curricula address these components using systematic and explicit instructional methods. These programs/curricula must provide instruction to accelerate learning and bring the student to grade-level standards. Effective programs/curricula are specialized and are delivered in small group settings.

Systematic instruction involves implementing instructional procedures consistently, focusing on a sequence of instruction, using explicit instruction, and progress monitoring. Explicit instruction includes

modeling, the use of think-alouds and examples, giving frequent opportunities to respond during guided practice, checking for understanding, and providing corrective feedback. Systematic, explicit instruction is enhanced by using advanced organizers, activating background knowledge, pacing, and maximizing instructional time.

Students are placed in small intervention groups within one week after benchmark assessments. The level of intensity is increased in order to accelerate learning for at-risk students. Selected intervention programs/curricula must provide scaffolding for students as well as ample opportunities for guided practice of reading skills.

Many factors can affect the process of selecting intervention materials at the state, district, and school level. Decision makers must consider the following factors when choosing programs/curricula for specific populations: personnel, time constraints, and components addressed by the program/curricula.

**Examples of scaffolding for struggling readers may include:**

- Reteach and review previously taught concepts
- Build on and connect background knowledge
- Sequence instruction of new concepts
- Model procedures and explain thought processes
- Use multiple techniques
- Maximize student engagement
- Provide immediate and appropriate feedback

From *Effective Instruction for Elementary Struggling Readers: Research-based Practices*, 2003, University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency

Participation in intervention groups should be based on continuous progress monitoring. All students who need strategic or intensive intervention must receive Tier II or Tier III instruction in addition to Tier I instruction. Students must not be excluded from intervention because of school level limitations.

Adequate personnel must be available in order to fully implement the selected intervention program/curricula. Classroom teachers, reading specialists, and interventionists may all conduct Tier II intervention groups. Tier II must be implemented outside the 90-minute block. Since Tier III is more intensive and requires a greater time commitment, it must be conducted outside of the classroom.

The selected Tier II intervention programs/curricula must provide instruction in all five components of reading. These selected intervention programs/curricula should support and enhance the core reading program/curricula. **Intervention instruction must not replace the core reading curriculum.** Pacing, content and emphasis of instruction should meet the needs that are identified by ongoing progress monitoring. When selecting the Tier III intervention program/curricula, the need for more intensive and specific support must be considered. Each student's greatest area of need should be addressed in order to accelerate learning of grade level standards. An intervention observation tool must be used to ensure that appropriate intervention is taking place.

*Each student's greatest area of need should be addressed in order to accelerate learning of grade level standards.*

Program/curricula selection information is available from the University of Oregon and the Florida Center for Reading Research. Both research centers evaluate reading programs for explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading. Reports documenting strengths and weaknesses of programs/curricula are available.



### Checklist for Selecting an Intervention

- ☐ Evaluate and select an intervention program/curricula with the guidance of the Literacy Team
- ☐ Meet on a regular basis to review program selection and to evaluate progress after the program is implemented
- ☐ Identify needs of students using benchmark, progress monitoring, and TCAP data
- ☐ Ensure that any adopted intervention program/curricula uses data as the driving force of instruction and is responsive to the changing needs of students
- ☐ Utilize the University of Oregon and/or Florida Center for Reading Research in order to access information regarding intervention programs
- ☐ Review empirical data for each program being considered
- ☐ Ensure that any adopted program/curricula is based upon scientifically based reading research, with research-based methods taking priority over discovery methods of instruction
- ☐ Preview selected programs/curricula—it is imperative that products are previewed by the leadership team before implementation
- ☐ Pilot the selected program/curricula at the school level for effectiveness
- ☐ Expand the program/curricula to a wider population after the piloting period is complete and results are confirmed by assessments

## SECTION 5

# Professional Development

## What is High Quality Professional Development?

Professional development refers to the experiences and activities that keep teachers informed and prepared to implement scientifically based reading research programs/curricula and strategies within an educational setting. Professional development activities can involve an individual teacher, a small group, a whole faculty, a district, a regional group, or a national training event. Professional development designs can include multiple formats:

- Workshops
- Summer academies
- On-line courses
- Whole day or 1/2 day in-service
- Traditional courses taken for credit
- Building-level faculty training events
- Collaborative team studies
- Grade-level team meetings
- Team teaching
- In-class assistance
- Peer observations

Professional Development requires:

- A supportive **context** with strong leadership
- Strong **content**, grounded in research, that includes the five essential components of reading instruction
- An effective **process** of implementation

## The Purpose of Professional Development

Reading proficiency is fundamental to student achievement across all subjects and grades. The single most important factor in improving reading achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher. Increasing student achievement demands instructional support be given to educators. Student achievement is heightened by teachers who participate in well-designed scientifically-based professional development activities. **High quality professional development provides a scientific knowledge base, advances explicit teaching skills, and**

*Professional development activities can involve an individual teacher, a small group, a whole faculty, a district, a regional group, or a national training event.*



**promotes the implementation of research-based programs and practices at all tier levels of intervention.** In addition, effective professional development cultivates future Literacy Leaders, mentors, and reading experts within the school.

### The Goal of High Quality Professional Development

*The Report of the Tennessee Reading Panel* has identified the following:

**Goal:** To provide on-going support and promote professional development for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals as they engage in all levels of literacy instruction.

**Objective:** Provide learning opportunities for educators in effectively implementing best practices of all components of reading.

Well-designed professional development aligns clearly with the comprehensive instructional program, including its research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards. All professional development plans administered under the Reading First Initiative must closely align with the principles of scientifically based reading research and the five essential components of reading instruction:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension



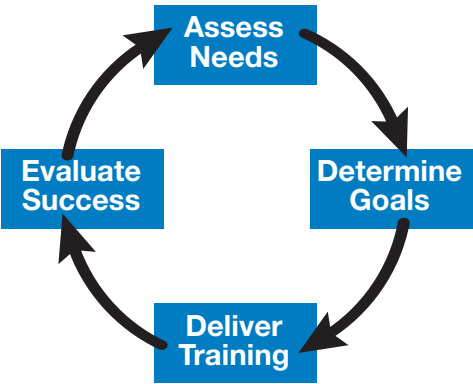
Professional educators must be proficient in the teaching of the essential components of reading, the relationship of these components, the progression in which they are taught, and the underlying structure of the English language. To ensure student progress, professional staff members must learn to administer and interpret all assessments necessary to implement the Reading First initiative. Professional development must assist teachers in understanding the difficulty some students encounter in learning to read. It should also enable them to become proficient in the delivery of SBRR strategies.

The Literacy Team is an important resource for professional development. In addition to creating school-wide professional development plans, the team may also assist with peer coaching, reciprocal teaching or other professional development strategies.

Successful reading intervention involves a commitment from every teacher and a collaborative partnership among the Literacy Leader, classroom instructors, interventionists, and administrators at the school and district level. Changes in instructional performance require extensive classroom practice and follow-up; therefore, effective professional development is often job-embedded and implemented or sustained over time.

Steps for Providing Professional Development to Promote Effective Intervention

- 1. Analyze assessment data at the individual student, classroom, grade, and school levels
- 2. Use this information in conjunction with observational data, teacher requests based on data, and information from other sources to identify areas of need
- 3. Set goals for professional development that will address teacher needs
- 4. Use the goals to determine the specific content for professional development
- 5. Determine the activities used for delivering professional development
  - a. Workshops, training, conferences, academies, courses, studies *(for initial information about a concept or strategy)*
  - b. Modeling, team teaching, classroom assistance, peer observations *(for guidance and support when practicing a new strategy)*
  - c. Peer, grade level, or staff discussion and data analysis *(for evaluating, adjusting, refining, or relearning a concept or strategy)*
- 6. Evaluate professional development that is provided
- 7. Design, adjust, or refine on-going professional development to address identified needs



Effective Professional Development Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are based on faculty needs identified through assessment, program evaluation, and observational data</li><li>• Should be implemented and <b>sustained over time</b>, allotting extended time for initial training and extensive follow-up in the classroom</li><li>• Must be collaborative, with teachers and leaders working together to find ways to address problems and improve instruction</li><li>• Provide participants with a variety of experiences, including individual study, small-group sessions, large group training, team teaching, discussion, modeling, reflection, and evaluation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer teachers ready access to assistance for understanding and applying the content of the program in the regular instructional setting</li><li>• Are provided by well-prepared leaders that have proven their ability to teach both the participants and the content of the training</li><li>• Use collaboration among Literacy Leaders and administrators for consistency and problem solving</li><li>• Are continuously evaluated to ensure effectiveness—with demonstration of changes in teacher practices and gains in student achievement</li></ul>
Ineffective Professional Development Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer a one-time only exposure to a given topic</li><li>• Offer only a series of workshops or training sessions with no follow-up, classroom support, or collaboration after initial training sessions</li><li>• Focus on programs or strategies that are NOT research-based</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ignore individual teachers’ needs and levels of expertise</li><li>• Disregard the diversity of classrooms</li><li>• Offer minimal support to teachers (no Literacy Leader or reading specialist at the building level)</li></ul>

Role of the Literacy Leader in Providing the Professional Development to Ensure Implementation of the Intervention Plan

- Plan, organize, and arrange professional development provided by external sources
- Conduct training sessions, model lessons, co-teach classes, provide classroom assistance, and help with organizing materials
- Lead and participate in meetings including Literacy Team meetings, grade-level planning meetings, and data analysis meetings
- Collaborate with administrators, cadre, state personnel, and other Literacy Leaders
- Provide training on student assessment and assist teachers in gaining a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of students

- Model, demonstrate, and co-teach (side-by-side) to enhance teacher proficiency with specific strategies or procedures
- Visit classrooms, perform literacy observations during the 90-minute reading block, and observe interventions to evaluate, reflect, and make changes in the professional development plan
- Recognize and reward improvement

**Checklist for Providing Professional Development to Ensure Effective Intervention**

- ☐ Goals and objectives stem from an in-depth needs assessment
- ☐ Modeling, demonstration, and practice are included in initial and ongoing training opportunities
- ☐ Follow-up activities provide a variety of experiences including on-site coaching, small group studies, and access to additional resources
- ☐ Instructional staff is provided with ready access to a trained individual that can help the staff implement programs/curricula and apply new strategies
- ☐ Training and follow-up on the use of all intervention program materials are provided
- ☐ Training on SBRR and the use of explicit instructional strategies are provided
- ☐ Training on the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based reading assessments is provided
- ☐ Training on the use of assessment data to drive instructional practices is provided
- ☐ Training on the use of a literacy observation tool for Literacy Leaders and principals is provided
- ☐ Training on the use of an intervention observation tool for Literacy Leaders and principals is provided
- ☐ A literacy observation tool is used to ensure that professional development is appropriately transferred into classroom practice.
- ☐ An intervention observation tool is used to determine the extent to which teachers are implementing the intervention programs appropriately
- ☐ Program leaders use data to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development in the implementation of the intervention component
- ☐ Follow-up and on-site support designed to improve the *fidelity of implementation* are based on this information

# Quick Reference Checklists

## Checklist for Literacy Team

- ☐ Select Literacy Team members at the beginning of the school year
- ☐ Conduct monthly meetings to determine areas of need and report to faculty
- ☐ Create school-wide benchmarking goals
- ☐ Analyze the effectiveness of intervention and make adjustments
- ☐ Submit recommendations to the Cadre for the five days of school-embedded professional development
- ☐ Create the 90-hour Professional Development Plan
- ☐ Determine the focus of the five days of school-embedded professional development

## Tier II Checklist

- ☐ Select research-based intervention program(s)
- ☐ Train and supervise interventionists
- ☐ Identify students who have not met benchmarks
- ☐ Identify specific skill areas needing additional instruction for each student
- ☐ Use flexible, homogeneous grouping
- ☐ Select components of the intervention curriculum that focus instruction on targeted skill areas
- ☐ Monitor progress every two-weeks with DIBELS and observations
- ☐ Use progress-monitoring information to adjust instruction, or exit students when appropriate
- ☐ Include a record of the intervention and progress-monitoring data in students' files

### Tier III Checklist

- ☐ Select research-based, intensive intervention programs/curricula
- ☐ Train and supervise interventionists
- ☐ Designate the intervention location
- ☐ Use DIBELS benchmark assessment to identify students not making progress in Tier II
- ☐ Identify specific skill areas needing intensive intervention for each student
- ☐ Arrange student grouping according to skill deficits
- ☐ Customize instruction based on targeted skill areas
- ☐ Monitor progress every week to two weeks with DIBELS progress monitoring
- ☐ Use progress monitoring information to adjust instruction or exit when appropriate
- ☐ Include a record of the intensive intervention and progress monitoring data in the students' files

### Assessment Checklist

- ☐ Set assessment schedule (3 benchmarks) and screen all students
- ☐ Plan a meeting with each grade level to review assessment data
- ☐ Gather class assessment data
- ☐ Identify and place students who are grade level or benchmark learners, students who are strategic (have difficulty with some reading concepts or skills), and students who are intensive (have extreme reading difficulties)
- ☐ Group students for instruction and intervention
- ☐ Identify SBRR materials for intervention
- ☐ Assign and schedule students for appropriate intervention activities
- ☐ Monitor students' progress
- ☐ Make adjustments based on progress monitoring
- ☐ Consult Benchmark Assessment Team as needed

### Checklist for Selecting an Intervention

- ☐ Evaluate and select an intervention program/curricula with the guidance of the Literacy Team
- ☐ Meet on a regular basis to review program/curricula selection and to evaluate progress after implementation
- ☐ Identify needs of students using benchmark, progress monitoring, and TCAP data
- ☐ Ensure that any adopted intervention program/curricula uses data as the driving force of instruction and is responsive to the changing needs of students
- ☐ Utilize the University of Oregon and/or Florida Center for Reading Research in order to access information regarding intervention programs
- ☐ Review empirical data for each program being considered
- ☐ Ensure that any adopted program/curricula is based upon scientifically based reading research, with research-based methods taking priority over discovery methods of instruction
- ☐ Preview selected programs—it is imperative that products are previewed by the leadership team before implementation
- ☐ Pilot the selected program/curricula at the school level for effectiveness
- ☐ Expand the program to a wider population after the piloting period is complete and results are confirmed by assessments

## Checklist for Providing Professional Development to Ensure Effective Intervention

- ☐ Goals and objectives stem from an in-depth needs assessment
- ☐ Modeling, demonstration, and practice are included in initial and ongoing training opportunities
- ☐ Follow-up activities provide a variety of experiences including on-site coaching, small group studies, and access to additional resources
- ☐ Instructional staff is provided with ready access to a trained individual that can help the staff implement programs/curricula and apply new strategies
- ☐ Training and follow-up on the use of all intervention program materials are provided
- ☐ Training on SBRR and the use of explicit instructional strategies are provided
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# Glossary

**Benchmark.** Assessment that is given three times a year to all students to determine student level in specific areas of reading.

**Cadre.** A professional group of reading experts who are assigned to Reading First schools to provide the five days of school-embedded professional development.

**Core reading programs.** Comprehensive reading program/curricula based on scientific reading research. This program/curricula is used in the classroom during the 90 minutes of reading instruction. The core program should enable the vast majority of students to attain reading goals.

**Diagnostic tests.** Instruments used to measure a variety of reading, language, or cognitive skills. Although they can be given as soon as a screening test indicates a child is behind in reading growth, diagnostic tests will usually be given only if a child fails to make adequate progress after being given additional help in learning to read. Diagnostic tests are designed to provide a more precise and detailed picture of the full range of a child's knowledge and skill so that instruction can be precisely planned.

**Differentiated instruction.** The matching of instruction to learners' needs in order to meet the different requirements of learners in a given classroom.

**Direct instruction.** Instruction that involves the teacher explicitly defining a concept, guiding students through its application, and arranging for extended guided practice until mastery is achieved.

**Discrepancy model.** Discrepancy model is a term used to describe the traditional method of determining learning disabilities in children. Professionals review educational assessments to determine if a child's IQ scores are significantly higher than achievement scores.

**Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).** Tennessee Reading First Schools use DIBELS to assess all students three times per year. This screening provides the data for determining student placement and/or movement within the Three-Tier Model. DIBELS is also used to progress monitor struggling readers.

**Explicit instruction.** Instruction that is concrete and visible. The teacher explains new concepts and strategies in clear and concise language. Explicit instruction involves modeling and explaining concepts and skills using many examples. Instruction is broken down into smaller steps. Teachers provide a high level of support as students practice concepts and skills.

**Fidelity of implementation.** A term used to describe the degree to which instruction follows the program plan.

**Intervention.** Intervention is an additional period of instruction for Tiers II and III outside the 90-minute reading block that focuses on getting struggling readers back on track. A classroom teacher, a specialized reading teacher, a paraprofessional, or a trained and monitored external interventionist delivers instruction in a small-group setting.

**Interventionist.** An interventionist provides additional small group reading instruction to students making inadequate progress.

**Intervention Observation Tool.** An instrument used to observe the Tier II and Tier III reading intervention groups.

**Literacy Team.** The literacy team is a decision-making body composed of a Literacy Leader, principal, Title I teacher, one member from each grade level and a special education representative, and possibly others. Their purpose is to implement and monitor the school's reading program/curricula.

**Literacy Observation Tool.** An instrument used to observe the ninety-minute classroom reading block.

**Modeling.** Modeling is overtly demonstrating a strategy, skill, or concept that will be learned and practiced.

**Progress Monitoring.** Assessment that is usually given every two weeks to struggling readers to assess the student's progress and to determine instructional and intervention needs. Progress monitoring assessment is given one measure at a time, but students may be measured in more than one progress monitoring area.

**Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI).** This method is allowed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, or IDEA. Response to intervention has two purposes: to provide early

support to students who are having academic difficulties and to offer an alternative to the discrepancy model.

**Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR).** Research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to acquire valid knowledge related to reading development, instruction, and the prevention of reading difficulties. For schools to make a difference in students' reading achievement, scientific research must be used to inform reading instruction, rather than ideology or philosophy.

**Scaffolding.** Scaffolding is an instructional technique that supports students' learning. Scaffolding can be provided through teachers' use of language, instructional materials, tasks, and grouping formats. The goal of scaffolding is to adjust and extend instruction so students are able to develop new concepts and skills. As students become more proficient, support is gradually withdrawn.

**Supplemental instruction.** Supplemental instruction supports and extends the critical elements of a core reading program/curricula. More instruction or practice is provided in specific areas of need (e.g. phonemic awareness, fluency).

**Systematic instruction.** Systematic instruction follows a carefully designed plan of instructional steps. It is planned, purposeful, and sequenced. Systematic instruction provides students with extensive teacher support during the early stages of learning.

**Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP).** TCAP is an outcome-based, timed, multiple choice assessment that measures skills in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This state mandated test for grades 3-8 provides student results to parents, teachers, and administrators. Some schools also choose to administer this criterion-based measurement in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2.

**The Three-Tier Model.** A prevention model that consists of three tiers or levels of instruction: Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. The Three-Tier Reading Model applies a prevention approach that is meant to be descriptive of how to approach reading difficulties, NOT prescriptive of the only way to proceed. The Three-Tier Model is designed to provide a safety net for struggling readers.

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